

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 03506 252124Z

12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 /060 W

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R 252115Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4855

INFO USMISSION NATO

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS MPOL NATO CA

SUBJ HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES NATIONAL DEFENSE

REF OTTAWA 3422, 3477

1. ON OCTOBER 24, HOUSE OF COMMONS MET AS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO DISCUSS NATIONAL DEFENSE ESTIMATES. SINCE GOC POLICY AND ISSUES ARISING THEREFROM ARE ALREADY WELL KNOWN (FOUR GOALS ARE TO PROTECT SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CANADA, NORTH AMERICAN DEFENSE, NATO, AND PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES; CRITICS MAINTAIN THA GOC HAS ALLOWED FORCES TO DETERIORATE AND IS NOT PROVIDING ENOUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO MAKE GOALS REALISTIC - SEE REFTELS), DEBATE RAUCOUS BUT NOT PARTICULARLY EDIFYING. NO NEW ISSUES AROSE AND NO NEW REVELATIONS WERE MADE REGARDING GOC INTENTIONS.

2. CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN FOCUSED CRITICISM ON INADEQUACY OF GOC MEASURES, DETERIORATION OF MILITARY SERVICE, AGE-OLD UNREALIZED "LIBERAL PARTY" PROMISES TO PROVIDE "BIGGER BANG FOR THE BUCK", AS SIZE OF FORCE HAS CONTINUALLY DIMINISHED AND EQUIPMENT HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE SHODDY. CONSERVATIVES ALSO PRESSED

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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 03506 252124Z

FOR CLEAR-CUT STATEMENT REGARDING GOC INTENTIONS AND

CLAIMED GOC "DECEIVING" AND "DEFRAUDING" CANADIAN PEOPLE.
GENERAL TENOR WAS THAT POLICY GOALS ARE GOOD BUT THAT
GOC NOT COMMITTED TO PUTTING UP MONEY TO ACHIEVE THEM.

3. NDP OPPOSITION, ON OTHER HAND, TENDED TO ARGUE THAT
SINCE GOC NOT WILLING TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR ADEQUATE FORCE
(WHICH NDP APPLAUDED), GOALS OBVIOUSLY HAD TO BE MODIFIED.
NDP SAID GOC SHOULD WITHDRAW OR OTHERWISE ALTER PARTICIPATION
IN NORAD. DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S FEBRUARY 1974
STATEMENT (WHICH WAS QUOTED AS "BECAUSE THERE IS NO
DEFENCE AGAINST MISSILES, DEFENCE AGAINST MANNED BOMBERS
IS NOT PRACTICABLE") WAS REFERRED TO SEVERAL TIMES IN
SUPPORT OF CONTENTION THAT GOC WASTING MONEY BY ANY FURTHER
NORAD PARTICIPATION. OTHER NDP CRITICS SUGGESTED THAT "THE
USEFULNESS OF NATO TO THIS COUNTRY IS OVER..."
AND URGED CANADA'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO BE
RE-EVALUATED.

4. FULL TEXT BY POUCH TO EUR/CAN AND NATO BRUSSELS.
PORTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL SECURITY, MILITARY CAPABILITIES, POLITICAL PARTIES, CONSULTANTS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OTTAWA03506
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740306-0570
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741016/aaaaanca.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: OTTAWA 3422, 3477
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <06-Aug-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES NATIONAL DEFENSE
TAGS: MPOL, CA, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005